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FINLEY'SLUCKYCHARM PUTS PERFECT CHURCHILL DOWNS RECORD ON LINE IN SATURDAY'S GRADE III, \$100,000 CHICAGO HANDICAP

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, June 21, 2017) – **Carl Moore Management LLC's** outstanding female sprinter **Finley'sluckycharm** will attempt to remain unbeaten at Churchill Downs when she concedes between six and 10 pounds to her 12 rivals in Saturday's 28th running of the Chicago Handicap (Grade III) for fillies and mares over seven furlongs.

Perfect in five starts beneath the track's iconic Twin Spires, Finley'sluckycharm registered her first graded stakes win in last month's \$100,000 Winning Colors (GIII) at Churchill Downs with overwhelming authority as the odds-on 1-5 favorite. The 4-year-old Kentucky-bred daughter of Twirling Candy broke fastest of all in the six-furlong sprint on May 27, widened her lead on the turn and comfortably drew away in hand for a runaway 5 ½-length score over stablemate **Mayla** – the largest margin of victory in 14 runnings of the race.

Finley'sluckycharm, trained by **Bret Calhoun** who won the 2013 Chicago Handicap with **Cozze Up Lady**, will break from post No. 8 under regular rider **Brian Hernandez Jr.** while toting 124 pounds – six more than **Mayla**, who will start from post No. 7 under **Gabriel Saez** at 118 pounds.

"She does everything so well and has such good natural speed that I just have to stay out of her way," Hernandez Jr. said.

The Winning Colors was Finley'sluckycharm's third stakes triumph. Following a narrow half-length loss to **Constellation** in the Grade I La Brea over seven furlongs at Santa Anita in late December, Finley'sluckycharm made her first start of the year on April 29 at Churchill Downs and recorded a three-quarter length win over **Athena** in the \$65,340 Roxelana Overnight Stakes. Prior to the La Brea, she won the \$82,400 Dream Supreme Overnight Stakes at Churchill Downs in late November by a jaw-dropping 8 ½ lengths while clocking six furlongs in 1:08.58 – a stakes record for the 12-year-old race.

Overall, Finley'sluckycharm boasts a career record of 9-7-1-0—\$344,468, and each of her seven victories have come at six furlongs or less.

Like the La Brea, Saturday's Chicago Handicap is seven-eighths of a mile.

"It was a very good race in the La Brea – a heart-breaking loss," Calhoun said. "I kind of understood it. We were a little bit vulnerable coming off two very fast races on the speed figures over a short period of time and shipping to California. She got pressed the whole way. It was a tough loss but I kind of understood it.

"I think seven-eighths is probably her maximum distance with top-level horses. She's a fast filly and she wants to be fast in her races. She's not rank but she's just naturally fast. ... (And) she does have an affinity for the Churchill Downs racing strip.

"We've got the (\$1 million) Breeders' Cup (Filly & Mare Sprint over seven furlongs) on our mind. We're hopeful we end up (at Del Mar on Nov. 3-4) and we're kind of campaigning her in that direction. ... We're still at our home base and, hopefully, we can save a little bit for the fall."

Heavily favored in four of her last five starts, Finley'sluckycharm is certain to be well-backed again Saturday in the field of 13.

The Chicago Handicap field from the rail out (with jockeys and assigned weights): **Pleasant Tales** (Miguel Mena, 115); **Athena** (Joe Rocco Jr., 117); **Kathballu** (Florent Geroux, 117); **Mines and Magic** (Robby Albarado, 117); **Ivy Bell** (Shaun Bridgmohan, 116); **Improv** (Declan Cannon, 116); **Mayla** (Saez, 118); **Finley'sluckycharm** (Hernandez Jr., 124); **Sweetgrass** (Chris Landeros, 117); **She Mabees Wild** (Jon Court, 117); **Covey Trace** (Jack Gilligan, 117); **Put Da Blame On Me** (James Graham, 114); and **Stageplay** (Corey Lanerie, 115).

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Mayla (20-5-5-4—\$275,104), Sweetgrass (21-4-1-8—\$325,895), Covey Trace (14-4-1-3—\$326,153) and three-time stakes winner Athena (23-7-3-4—\$433,670) finished second through fifth, respectively, behind Finley'sluckycharm in the Winning Colors. Covey Trace, winner of last year's \$350,000 Charles Town Oaks (GIII), is the only other graded stakes-winner in the field.

Kathballu (26-7-3-4—\$419,865), a three-time stakes winner, and Pleasant Tales (22-4-2-1—\$215,818) have been rested since finishing third and fourth, respectively, behind Finley'sluckycharm in the Roxelana.

Improv (13-2-3-3—\$116,020) cuts back in distance after running a neck back of Walkabout in the \$100,000 Matron (GIII) over 1 1/16 miles on May 20.

Indiana-bred stakes winner She Mabee Wild (22-6-5-4—\$320,324), Mines and Magic (11-3-2-1—\$194,566) and Stageplay (9-3-1-1—\$231,104), winner of last year's Silverbulletday at Fair Grounds, ran 1-2-3 in a seven-furlong allowance/optional claiming event at Churchill Downs on the May 27 Winning Colors undercard. Ivy Bell (10-3-3-1—\$150,060) also won a seven-furlong allowance/optional claiming race that day as well.

The Chicago Handicap will go as Race 10 at approximately 5:21 p.m. (all times Eastern) on an 11-race card that begins at 12:45 p.m. The program also has two allowance races and a trio of maiden special weights, including a five-furlong sprint for 2-year-old fillies.

Located some 330 miles from its northern namesake, this will mark the first year that the Chicago Handicap will be staged at Churchill Downs. Its first 27 runnings were contested at Arlington Park, the Louisville track's Churchill Downs Incorporated sister track in Arlington Heights, Ill. Had Churchill Downs Racetrack and its horsemen not stepped up to host the Chicago Handicap, the popular Midwest graded stakes race for fillies and mares would have gone on hiatus in 2017.

Churchill Downs admission gates will open Saturday at 11:30 a.m. General Admission is \$3, reserved seating is \$10 and reserved dining packages are \$38. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at ChurchillDowns.com/Tickets.

The Chicago Handicap is the featured race on the penultimate week of Churchill Downs' Spring Meet. There will be four days of racing this week – Thursday (first race at 5 p.m.), Friday (12:45 p.m.), Saturday (12:45 p.m.) and Sunday (12:45 p.m.) – and three on closing week, which is billed as "Sunset Stretch" – Wednesday, June 28 (5 p.m.), Thursday, June 29 (5 p.m.) and Friday, June 30 (6 p.m.).

This week's Twilight Thursday abbreviated eight-race program is highlighted by \$1 draft beers, food trucks, live music on the Plaza stages by Louisville's **Alex Wright** and a Wagering 101 tent for betting advice. There also is a growing \$112,293 jackpot carryover for the 20-cent minimum Single 6 Jackpot on Races 3-8, which is scheduled to commence at 5:58 p.m.

Mike Battaglia, who spent 19 years as Churchill Downs' track announcer (1978-96), and Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races announcer **Paul Espinosa Jr.** will describe the racing action at Churchill Downs on Thursday and Friday, respectively, as regular commentator **Travis Stone** gives the commencement speech at his former high school in Schroon Lake, N.Y. Stone is scheduled to return to the Churchill Downs' microphone Saturday afternoon.

Sunday's card will feature the return of **Family Adventure Day Presented by Kroger**. The day of racing is complimented by plenty of family activities in the Plaza area including pony rides, inflatables, a petting zoo, stick horse races on the turf course, face painting and more.

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